

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

November 3, 2011

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on November 3, 2011 in CyRide's Conference Room. President Pro Tem Vander Velden called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m. Trustees in attendance were Anders, Schainker, Fox, Wacha, and Vander Velden. Absent: Trustee Madden.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Anders made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2011 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees Meeting. Trustee Wacha seconded the motion. Five Ayes. No Nays. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public in attendance.

RATE SETTING RESOLUTION – Fares (2012-1): Director Kyras discussed with transit board members the process required to proceed with changing the rate structure to generate additional revenue. She indicated that the Transit Board would consider a change first with formal approval by the City Council at their November 22, 2011 City Council meeting. She indicated that the rate setting resolution included the new fare structure discussed at the October 3, 2011 Transit Board meeting reflecting a 20-25% across-the-board increase in fares.

Trustee Wacha made a motion to approve the 2011-2012 rates for fares that reflect the 20-25% increase in most categories effective January 1, 2012. Trustee Schainker seconded the motion. Five Ayes. No Nays. Motion carried.

RATE SETTING RESOLUTION – Passes (2012-2): Director Kyras indicated that this rate setting resolution was for the pass portion of CyRide's proposed new fare structure. She indicated that this resolution contains a new reduced pass category for seniors, disabled persons, and Medicaid and Medicare passengers for those not able to pay for the increase with all other passes increasing 20-25%. The effective date would be January 1, 2012. Formal approval by the transit board is required and the City Council at their November 22, 2011 City Council meeting.

Trustee Wacha made a motion to approve the 2011-2012 rates for passes. Motion was seconded by Trustee Fox. Five Ayes. No Nays. Motion approved.

BUS PURCHASE WITH STATE OF GOOD REPAIR FEDERAL FUNDS: Director Kyras explained that the Iowa Department of Transportation had applied for a Federal Transit Administration discretionary grant under the State of Good Repair program. She reminded board members that this application, and the possible funding of CyRide buses under this

statewide bus replacement grant, were discussed at the July 2011 board meeting. At that July meeting, the Transit Board approved the inclusion of CyRide buses as part of this application, but acknowledged that its buses were lower in priority than the anticipated funding might be. The Iowa DOT received a \$5 million dollar grant and, as a significant number of other transit systems higher on the priority list of bus replacements declined buses, this allowed CyRide to be eligible for replacement of two minibuses under this state grant. The minibuses to be replaced went into service in 2003 and are in poor condition. CyRide would benefit from lower operating costs and a more comfortable ride for CyRide passengers as a result of their replacement.

Trustee Madden arrived at 5:25 p.m.

Director Kyras indicated that the local match requirement for the two buses, combined, would be \$18,600 and is included in next year's capital plan. Because these buses would be operated on biodiesel, the grant allows 90% federal dollars; however, the Capital Plan reflects an 83% federal share, thereby, allowing for a savings in local match funding. She indicated that these vehicles would be placed in a grant and then would need to be procured resulting in their delivery in the next fiscal year (the same year they are scheduled for replacement).

Transit Board members asked if the minibuses are for use strictly for senior services only. Director Kyras indicated that the minibuses are used for fixed route services with lower ridership, weekend routes, and the Pink route.

Trustee Anders made a motion to move forward with the approval of the \$18,600 local match to purchase two minibuses in the 2012-2013 budget year under the State of Iowa's State of Good Repair grant. Motion seconded by Trustee Fox. Six Ayes. No Nays. Motion approved.

INTERMODAL FACILITY CHANGE ORDER: Director Kyras informed the Transit Board that the Intermodal Facility project, which began in March 2011, is moving forward. During the March 2011 transit board meeting, board members directed staff to obtain its approval and City Council's for cumulative change order amounts over \$50,000. Director Kyras indicated that a majority of the change orders to-date are reflective of the poor soil conditions found in certain portions of the site. The Transit Board approved a \$42,000 change order in July, and at the November meeting are being requested to review a second large change order to consider removing the poor soil in a second location and replace it with good soil. Director Kyras explained that it has taken longer to negotiate the fee for this change due to the longer federal process required and the wide divergence of costs established by the contractor and through the independent cost

estimate. The two cost estimates were \$45,000 versus \$160,000. The final, agreed-upon dollar amount is \$52,103 to Weitz Corporation for this work.

CyRide's recommendation is for the Transit Board's approval of Change Order #12. Director Kyras brought the change order before the City Council November 1, 2011 contingent upon Transit Board's approval, to accelerate payment to the contractor for his work. There will be one more change order due to the poor soil conditions and will be included in the November 16 conference call for consideration of its approval.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve Change Order #12 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$52,103 to Weitz Corporation of Des Moines, Iowa for over-excavation of poor soils on the Intermodal Facility project. Seconded by Trustee Wacha. Six Ayes. No Nays. Motion carried.

2012-2013 BUDGET PREPARATION/SERVICE LEVEL: CyRide staff members have begun the budget process for the 2012/13 budget year and, as a result, request transit board member's direction on additional options of interest to the board, other than the baseline budget proposed each year, especially in light of the current financial situation facing CyRide. Staff has prepared information on additional services that have been requested by the public as well as a recap of service reduction options gathered as a result of the fare increase/service change study conducted this past summer. Director Kyras explained each of the public service requests.

First request is for evening service to the DMACC Hunziker service center, which is an annual request since the Center opened five years ago. This option would provide two additional trips on the Gray route to the Center, one departing at 6:05 p.m. and 9:05 p.m. at a cost of \$13,780.

The second public request is for additional service on the Gray Route to provide more service to meet the new demand from the Grove and Laverne Apartments on S. 16th St. Currently, the Gray and Yellow routes, combined, provide hourly service. Since August, CyRide has received six requests for more frequent service, as well as service operating longer hours into the evening. Operation's staff has monitored ridership from these new apartments and ridership has increased between 5 – 17 rides per trip. This route is not overloaded at this time, but staff believes it will be busier when cold weather begins. Two options were discussed for consideration:

- Adding two additional buses between 7:00 am and 9:00 p.m. at a cost of \$107,000.
- Eliminating the Orange route extension to Vet Med requiring ISU students, faculty and staff to walk up the hill to the Vet Med facility. A new stop could be

placed on S. 16th to accommodate ISU. The route would continue on S. 16th past Vet Med and the new apartments and turn around on Buckeye. This would create 36 additional trips between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. to serve new patrons at the apartments at an additional cost of \$24,000. Staff monitored ridership at the current Vet Med stop on their property and found that 65 individuals get on at this stop and 59 get off the bus for a total of 124 rides.

Trustee Schainker asked CyRide staff to verify that Buckeye is constructed to meet CyRide bus standards for operation on this street.

The third public request is for more service along S. Duff after 6:30 p.m. to travel to movie theaters and to the businesses along S. Duff. Currently service ends at 6:15 p.m. but the request is to extend service to 10:15 p.m. on the Yellow Route at a cost of \$39,500.

There are no additional service requests identified by staff to allow the service to operate efficiently.

Service reductions were recommended at the October 3rd meeting with the table described in the board packet summarizing the annual savings and lost riders for each change.

One additional option, #14, was recommended by a CyRide Dispatcher and could be considered. This change would eliminate the first two trips on Gold route each weekday. Trustee Vander Velden asked how many individuals used these two trips. CyRide's Transit Coordinator, Tom Davenport, indicated between 2 and 5 riders per trip per day.

Director Kyras asked for Transit Board direction on the number and which services, or reduction of services, to include in budget options for the December board meeting. She indicated that Option #1 would be the baseline budget, which projects forward current staff and service levels into the 2012-2013 budget year. Trustee Schainker asked what level of local funding was needed in the two-year pro forma presented at the November 3rd board meeting. Director Kyras indicated that it required a 7% local partner funding increase, and that it also included eliminating holiday service, and the last trip on Gold, a 10% federal funding reduction and increased fares.

Trustee Wacha indicated that increasing service at this time when the transit system has had to increase fares would not be appropriate, but that he would be open to looking at offsetting service increases with reductions in other services.

Trustee Vander Velden asked with Service Reduction Option #14, if there were any trips available for Gold route passengers before 8:00 a.m. Tom Davenport, indicated that the first two trips, 7:06 a.m. and 7:26 a.m., would be eliminated leaving one trip at 7:46 a.m. He indicated that this would then coincide with the start time of other circulator routes.

Director Kyras clarified that Service Reduction Option #5 is the option included in the pro forma presented at the November meeting.

Other Trustees inquired about grant funding for the Pink route. Director Kyras indicated that the 2011-2012 budget year is the last year for full grant funding on the Pink route. She indicated that state funding would be eliminated beginning in the 2012-2013 budget year, but this route would still be eligible to receive JARC funding.

Director Kyras suggested that a second option be developed that reflected staff's recommended reduction of services – holiday service and last trip on the Gold route.

Trustee Schainker inquired as to when CyRide staff would find out about FY2012 federal funding levels. Director Kyras indicated that Congress is in the process of discussing this, but it could take as long as next spring before they approve a new transportation budget.

Trustee Anders reaffirmed the changes that are needed to make up the \$250,000 budget shortfall through June of 2012. Director Kyras indicated that two changes were approved by the Transit Board - the fare increase, which would generate \$112,000 from January to June 2012, and the internal cost saving cuts at \$80,000 for a total just under \$200,000. She indicated that the service cuts had been postponed by the transit board for discussion with the 2012-2013 budget.

Director Kyras indicated that the two largest budget "unknowns" were the fuel and federal dollars. Further, she indicated that since the beginning of the current fiscal year, CyRide has averaged \$3.12 per gallon for fuel. She indicated that the 2012-2013 budgeted price per gallon was \$3.50 per gallon.

Trustee Schainker asked if the pro forma budget funded local capital at previous budget levels. Director Kyras indicated that it did not and that typically \$600,000 to \$700,000 per year was able to be transferred to capital for matching grants and to pay for capital items. She indicated that the pro forma budget was between \$239,000 and \$331,000 per year for the next two budgets.

Trustee Fox asked if service increases were not approved with the budget, if GSB could use funds in its trust fund account to later add Gray route service. Director Kyras indicated that could be done at any time, but also indicated that there would need to an

ongoing commitment in future years to fund the service either through CyRide's budget or for GSB to continue to fund the service. She also indicated that the bus tracking project would draw down the Trust Fund balance as well.

Trustee Wacha made a motion to move forward with the two options and bring these back in December.

QUARTERLY OPERATION'S REPORT: First quarter of the fiscal year shows ridership is up 8.6% for the first quarter. In addition, farebox revenue is up, operating expenses for passengers are lower, operation expenses are 2.5% higher because of fuel, and revenue miles per hour are slightly higher. First quarter efficiency measures indicate increased performance. CyRide dispatchers have been monitoring the routes and are being very conservative to aid in holding down expenses. As a result, buses are a lot fuller than normal.

The Maintenance performance indicators, show that there has been an improvement in the number of bus interior cleanings, mechanical problems are lower due to the new fleet, diesel miles have increased only slightly and the number of gallons consumed has decreased. The decreased in gallons consumed can be attributed to achieving a positive increase in miles per gallon from the Hybrids and the sale of its oldest buses, replaced with buses that get better mileage.

On the fixed route operations side, CyRide has been able to hire more drivers (+8.7%), which has decreased CyRide's over-time costs, savings over \$9,000 in the first quarter. CyRide's training staff has worked very hard to achieve this full staffing level.

From recent years, Dial-A-Ride ridership is higher. Revenue is lower the first quarter as a result of misunderstandings in the fare structure for this service by Heartland staff. Heartland keeps all farebox revenues in addition to per ride charges.

Moonlight Express is 61.95% higher because of the Iowa/Iowa State game, and an average nightly increase of 39%. Halloween night, ridership was approximately 3,000, which is close to the number of rides carried for the Iowa/Iowa State game weekend.

Trustee Wacha thanked the CyRide staff for the excellent job they are doing.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director Kyras mentioned there were a number of issues about which to inform the transit board.

INTERMODAL - Intermodal Facility made up a couple of weeks on the construction schedule because of good weather with the completion date scheduled for June 6, 2012. Also, there will be an additional change order for construction.

Tiger III for Phase II of the facility was submitted with hopes this grant application will receive funding.

RIDERSHIP - First quarter ridership for fixed route is higher with the highlighted routes showing substantially increased ridership such as the Pink route, MLX, and Brown route. Additionally, September set a new all time record with 693,820 riders. October will be somewhere between 670,000 to 680,000 rides. If ridership continues at this level, CyRide will be close to 5.8 million rides this fiscal year compared to the 5.4 rides last year.

DIAL-A-RIDE – The Director and Transit Coordinator met with HIRTA and Boone County Transportation regarding Dial-A-Ride service. The meeting went very well and it is staff's belief that if CyRide were to contract with either one of the two agencies, it would be a very positive step for the service. Currently, CyRide is preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Dial-A-Ride service to distribute in January.

BUILDING – Staff is currently negotiating a contract for A/E services for flood protection, bus storage expansion, raising ceilings and structural issues. CyRide received five bids, evaluated the bids, and asked the top three firms to interview with CyRide. Based on those interviews, the firms were ranked with URS first, Newman Monson second, and Shive-Hattery third. As part of the interview process, each of the firms were asked the same six questions to gain knowledge of their strengths and approach to the project. CyRide is following federal procurement regulations, which requires it to negotiate with the top ranked firm, which is URS. If a reasonable fee cannot be reached, the negotiation moves onto the second, then third firm. CyRide anticipates having this process completed for the November 16th conference call meeting, to the City Council on November 22nd and can have the firm under contract by Thanksgiving.

CHANGE IN SERVICE LEVEL AROUND THE HOLIDAYS – CyRide usually operates a Saturday and Sunday schedule over the holiday break because the University and Ames School systems operate under reduced hours or are closed. However, two issues have come to CyRide's attention. ISU has designated different holiday closings than the City and the Ames school system resumes classes January 2, which is a holiday for ISU and the City of Ames. CyRide tries to match its service level with the need by employees at ISU and Ames Community school district students. As a result, staff proposes two additional trips in the morning on December 27th and January 2nd since there would not be any service before 8:10 a.m. with the Saturday and Sunday schedule. If the transit board does not have any concerns with this decision, CyRide staff will move forward to operate the additional service at a minimal cost of no more than \$3,000.

DISCUSSION OF PARKING FEES AT ISU COMMUTER LOT - Director Kyras reported she was involved in a meeting with the ISU Parking Systems, who are considering adding a parking fee for people who use the commuter parking lot. This could be a disincentive to ride from the lot and disperse ridership throughout the community potentially increase CyRide's cost to carry the same number of riders. She indicated that the Orange Route currently carries between 8,000 and 9,000 passengers a day and is very efficient.

Trustee Madden confirmed the discussions, but indicated that there are several challenges associated with charging a fee. He indicated that some members of the committee feel users should be contributing; however, students already pay a student fee for CyRide and feel they would be paying twice. He indicated that he was not sure where discussions might end up. ISU's Transportation Advisory Committee will have its recommendation to the Administration the first of the year.

TITLE VI - FTA is proposing changes to Title VI to become effective in April 2012. This requirement ensures that transit systems provide equal service to all customers, regardless of race or income-level. The new regulations would require CyRide to monitor and document its Title VI program at the same level as large transit system's like New York City that have dedicated staff to administer these programs. Staff expressed their concern that this level of documentation could not be accomplished with current staff due to the magnitude of information, surveys and data required. CyRide will have an opportunity to comment on this proposed regulation before it becomes final. Currently, any system with more than 200,000 in population, must meet a higher standard. Under the proposed rules a small transit system that receives \$3 million in discretionary funding or has an annual budget of \$10 million, would be placed in that more stringent tier. This would require additional staff and would become an unfunded mandate.

TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Conference call November 16 at 9:00 a.m. and Tuesday, December 6 at 5:15 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.

Bob Anders, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary